



**Morning Alert - Tuesday, October 31, 2017**

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## **HEADLINES**

### **Morning news**

All broadcasters gave top play to reports that the police will arrest a 23-year-old man over his involvement in the disappearance of a woman from Hachioji, Tokyo. The networks reported that several bodies were found in the man's apartment in Zama, Kanagawa.

Top stories in national dailies included a GSDF plan to deploy an amphibious unit to Okinawa in the first half of the 2020s (Asahi); the indictment of the Trump campaign's former chairman (Mainichi); a plan by the Justice Ministry to change its asylum system amid an increase in false applications (Yomiuri); and a GOJ plan to cut medical service fees to address growing welfare costs (Nikkei).

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **President Trump, PM Abe discuss upcoming Japan visit**

All papers reported on a teleconference between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe held on Monday evening (Japan time). The papers wrote that the two leaders agreed during the 20-minute conversation to further deepen their discussions on North Korea and other issues in Asia. According to a briefing by the Japanese side, PM Abe told President Trump that during the President's three-day visit from Sunday, he wants to send a strong message about the coordination between Japan and the United States. President Trump reportedly told the prime minister that he looks forward to visiting Japan and that the United States stands with Japan 100%. The President also reportedly said his upcoming visit will be an excellent opportunity to show the world that there is no room for doubt about the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

### **Abe, Duterte agree to strengthen pressure on North Korea**

All papers reported on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Philippine President Duterte at the Kantei

on Monday, during which the two leaders agreed to step up pressure on North Korea. However, Asahi wrote that there were differences between Abe and Duterte because the Philippine leader stressed the need for dialogue with Pyongyang.

Abe told a post-meeting joint press conference that Japan and the Philippines will work together to address North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, resolve the abductions of the Japanese nationals, and ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific with China's militarization of the South China Sea in mind. Duterte criticized North Korea's provocations, but did not mention issues related to the South China Sea.

### **Iranian president, IAEA chief discuss nuclear agreement**

Monday evening's Asahi wrote that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Amano held a meeting with Iranian President Rouhani in Tehran on Sunday. The paper wrote that with the Trump administration's call for abrogation or revision of the 2015 nuclear agreement on the grounds that Iran has failed to implement the accord, Amano stressed the importance of the agreement by saying that Tehran is fully implementing the accord. According to the office of the president, Amano told the Iranian leader that the IAEA is fair and will continue to release reports on Iran's implementation of the agreement. Rouhani reportedly told Amano that no country, including the U.S., can ignore international agreements such as the nuclear accord.

## **SECURITY**

### **Japan to deploy amphibious unit to Okinawa**

Asahi gave top play to a report saying that it has learned from several GOJ sources that the Ground Self-Defense Forces will establish in March 2018 a 2,100-strong Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade. Its headquarters and two regiments will be situated in Camp Ainoura in Nagasaki Prefecture. The paper wrote that the GSDF has also decided to deploy another regiment with 600 personnel at Camp Hansen in Okinawa in the first half of the 2020s and has begun discussing the idea with the U.S. side. According to the paper, Japan is considering deploying the unit to Okinawa after some U.S. Marines are transferred to Guam under the force realignment plan. The paper speculated that the planned deployment in Okinawa, which is located in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands, is aimed at keeping China in check and enhancing Japan's readiness to defend the Nansei Islands. However, the paper wrote that Okinawa may oppose the idea by arguing that the deployment of a GSDF unit at Camp Hansen will not help reduce the base-hosting burden on the prefecture.

### **CCS Suga comments on press report on Osprey accident rate**

Monday evening's Mainichi wrote that concerning its earlier report that the rate of serious accidents involving MV-22 Ospreys is now higher than the rate for Marine aircraft overall, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press on Monday: "Accidents can occur due to factors other than aircraft

functions, such as maintenance issues and pilot error. It is not appropriate to evaluate aircraft safety based solely on the accident rate.” Suga added that the GOJ will continue to call on the U.S. to ensure the safety of flight operations.

### **U.S., Japanese, and ROK brass discuss North Korea**

Nikkei wrote that the Ministry of Defense announced on Monday that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dunford, SDF Joint Chiefs of Staff Kawano, and ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Jeong held talks in Hawaii on Monday. The three officers confirmed their nations’ coordination against North Korea. The paper wrote that this was the first time for the three nations to hold a meeting of their top military officers since October 2016. Sankei ran a similar Kyodo story adding that the U.S., Japanese, and ROK officials also discussed military coordination, including interoperability, and cooperation in such areas as disaster response and cybersecurity.

### **Foreign, defense ministers discuss North Korea with NATO chief**

Nikkei wrote that visiting NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg held separate meetings with Foreign Minister Kono and Defense Minister Onodera on Monday. The NATO chief agreed with the Japanese officials that North Korea’s nuclear and missile development is posing a serious threat to the international community and it is necessary to apply maximum pressure on Pyongyang.

### **Rail authorities lock coin lockers, remove trash cans in advance of POTUS visit**

NHK reported this morning that Tokyo Metro began to lock coin lockers and remove trash cans at major stations in Tokyo ahead of President Trump’s visit to Tokyo from Nov. 5 to 7 so they can’t be used for bomb attacks. According to the network, Tokyo Metro began locking coin lockers at major stations in Tokyo and removing trash cans from all stations in Tokyo last night. The network said JR East will also lock coin lockers and remove trash cans at major stations in Tokyo starting Nov. 4, adding that both Tokyo Metro and JR East are also planning to patrol stations and trains.

## **ECONOMY**

### **New Zealand likely to remain in TPP 11**

Nikkei wrote that the unity of the 11 TPP member states will likely be maintained because the new administration of New Zealand has softened its stance on the free trade agreement. The paper wrote that discussions by the 11 nations will enter a critical stage toward reaching a broad agreement in November, but the negotiators have not yet agreed on which of the 50 items to select from the original trade pact to be frozen.

Monday evening’s Nikkei wrote that New Zealand Prime Minister Ardern hinted at the possibility of her nation ratifying the “TPP 11” during an interview with a local radio network on Monday. Ardern expressed her willingness to remove obstacles for ratifying the updated TPP agreement ahead of the APEC leaders’ meeting to be held on Nov. 10-11 by reportedly saying that it is not a choice between the TPP and restrictions on the real estate market, including foreign home ownership.

Nikkei wrote that strong calls from the livestock and other industries for the nation's participation in the TPP agreement are behind Arden's positive stance.

**POTUS-VISIT ITEMS FROM AFTERNOON ALERT**

- [Police conducting checks of vehicles in front of U.S. Embassy](#) (NTV)
- [Metropolitan police conduct drills to prepare for POTUS visit](#) (Fuji TV)
- [Experts discuss North Korea, President Trump's upcoming visit to Japan](#) (NHK)
- [Trump, Abe to highlight N. Korea in lieu of FTA: U.S. experts](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Viral star Piko Taro to entertain Trump during Japan visit](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe wants 'maximum' pressure on Pyongyang from Trump visit](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

